



Warwickshire  
**POLICE**



West Mercia  
**POLICE**

## **Warwickshire Police and West Mercia Police**

### **Corporate Communications On Call/Standby Procedures**

**V5**

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## **Introduction**

The Corporate Communications function works to ensure Warwickshire Police and West Mercia Police engage, motivate, inform and educate our communities, partners and workforce through the delivery of targeted communications using channels that are appropriate to our audiences.

It must be acknowledged that both the police service and the media work 24/7 and, as such, provisions must exist to provide an appropriate communications service for the workforce and for the media outside office hours.

## **1. Media Enquiries to the OCC**

During the hours of 8am – 6pm Monday to Friday any calls from the media to the Operations and Communications Centre (OCC) should be directed to the News Hub.

Outside of these normal office hours and on bank holidays media calls will come in via the call handling functions and will be dealt with by the OCC Inspector directly, he/she will allocate to the OCC Sergeant or a Duty Inspector in one of the seven policing areas to respond to the reporter or, where appropriate, call the On Call Communications Officer.

Any media enquiries that are not regarding ongoing incidents or are not time sensitive will be advised to contact the News Hub during opening hours.

For example, we will not respond to speculative enquiries such as “is there anything going on?” but we should respond to enquiries such as “why is there a road closure in place?”

It is not the role of the call handling operator to respond to the media or decide what is appropriate to respond to, as such all calls must be put through to the Duty Inspector to decide whether it is appropriate to respond and how.

The alliance has a media line service available, this provides an opportunity for the OCC and Corporate Communications to update a voicemail system with details of incident updates/press releases/statements. Local media contacts have a phone number and PIN that allows them to access this service.

The media line service for Warwickshire Police and West Mercia Police should be used by OCC Inspectors to release information about ongoing incidents outside of normal office hours. Journalists are encouraged to use this service during these times.

To record a new message on media line service dial [REDACTED]  
When prompted add the mailbox ID [REDACTED] and the PIN is [REDACTED].

To report a fault on the media line service dial [REDACTED].

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To listen to updates on the media line service call: 0871 220 7790

In the case of ongoing major or critical incidents any holding statements prepared by the On Call Communications Officer will be made available to the OCC inspector. Any news releases will be issued via the force websites.

## **2. The Role of the On Call Communications Officer**

A member of the Corporate Communications function is available 24/7 to provide strategic advice and guidance and respond to major and critical incidents and support force operations.

A call out can mean providing remote support and advice or, if required, attending a required location.

The appropriate response will be determined by the On Call Communications Officer in consultation with the operational lead for the incident and the Corporate Communications Manager if additional resources are required.

This service provided can be full communications support (via all appropriate channels) in the event of:

- Major or critical incidents, e.g.: murders, firearms incidents, multiple fatal road traffic collisions
- Gold or high level 'risk to reputation' issues, e.g.: arrest or death of a police officer.
- Risk management issues which potentially make national headlines.
- High risk missing people, where life may be in danger.
- LRF civil contingency issues – e.g: severe flooding
- Terrorism or incidents of national security
- Mutual aid communication requirements
- Child Rescue Alert, kidnap, blackmail or extortion incidents.

In any of these circumstances the OCC or operational lead for the incident should call the On Call Communications Officer for support.

In addition to being On Call in the event of the above and being available to offer advice, the On Call Communication Officer will carry out a number of proactive tasks:

- Dial in to the Daily Management Meeting on Saturdays, Sundays and bank holidays to ascertain any major or critical incidents which may need support.
- Periodically (approximately 15 mins in the morning and 15 mins in the afternoon of each weekend day and bank holidays) monitor the force social media sites during their On Call period. This may result in action being required to respond to any key issues arising or critical reputational comments.
- Monitor media coverage generally for early identification of arising issues (as part of the above twice daily weekend checks).

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- Make contact with the Force Duty Inspector between 4pm and 5pm (during shift handover) on weekend days and bank holidays to ascertain any immediate or arising issues.

**3. Contacting the On Call Communications Officer**

The details of the On Call Communications Officer rota can be found on both force intranet sites.

**4. Managerial Support**

A Corporate Communications Manager is also on call 24/7 to provide support to the On Call Communications Officer and to offer gold level strategic advice and support. This rota is also located on both force intranets.